

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in the present application.

Formal Matters

1. The Examiner objects to claim 8 as containing informalities. The Applicant has amended the claim as suggested by the Examiner. The Examiner indicated that amending the claim as suggested would place the claim into allowable form. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asks the Examiner to withdraw the object and allow claims 8 and 9.

2. Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 4 and 5.

Art Rejection

1. Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Motegi, U.S. Patent No. 6,307,604 ("Motegi"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the reasons stated below.

To be an "anticipation" rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the reference must teach every element and recitation of the Applicants' claims. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are proper only when the claimed subject matter is identically disclosed or described in the prior art. Thus the reference must clearly and unequivocally disclose every element and recitation of the claimed invention.

Applicant submits that Motegi fails to disclose at least the following recitation of independent claim 1.

a controller for reading print type information sent through a communication interface together with print data and determining whether a user selected a confidential print mode or a general print mode, and for performing, when the confidential print mode is selected, the printing of a

confidential print data file received when a code that is the same as a secret code set in the received print type information is input through the input unit; and

Motegi is directed to a computer based network printing system which enables printing from a printer anywhere in the network. Specifically, and with reference to Figure 3, a user sends a print request S1 to a network computer that controls the entire network (see Col. 2, lines 44-46). The network computer associates the print data with a job number and password S2. The user then selects a desired printer on the network and enters the job number and password S4. The printer, through the printer server, sends a request to the network computer. Upon verification, the data sent from the user is forwarded to the printer and printed S11.

Motegi, however, does not disclose, teach or suggest a controller for determining whether a user selected a confidential print mode or a general print mode, and for performing, when the confidential print mode is selected, the printing of a confidential print data file received when a code that is the same as a secret code set in the received print type information is input through the input unit. Rather, the user in Motegi simply transmits a general print request. Upon receiving the request, the network computer 113 and printer server 111 assigned job number and password to the print request and transmits this information back to the user. When the user enters the assigned job number and password into the selected printer 107, the network computer 113 verifies the input information and if approved issues a print command. In short, there is absolutely no disclosure or motivation in Motegi of enabling a user to select at least between a confidential print mode and a general print mode.

Because Motegi fails to disclose each and every recitation of the claimed subject matter, Motegi cannot possibly anticipate independent claim 1. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection from claim 1.

2. Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Motegi, as applied above in claim 1, in combination with Uematsu, U.S. Patent No. 5,562,351 ("Uematsu").

Claim 2 depends from independent claim 1. Motegi is deficient with respect to claim 1 for at least the reasons stated above. Therefore, the Examiner must rely on Uematsu to compensate for the foregoing deficiencies.

Uematsu is directed to a printer system having a constant memory. Uematsu, however, fails to disclose the above identified recitations with respect to independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 2 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to withdraw the § 103(a) rejection.

3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Motegi, as applied above in view of claim 1, in combination with Ban, U.S. Patent No. 6,332,170 B1).

Claim 3 depends from independent claim 1. Motegi is deficient with respect to claim 1 for at least the reasons stated above. Therefore, the Examiner must rely on Ban to compensate for the foregoing deficiencies.

Ban is directed to a printer having interrupt capabilities so that a user can obtain special print jobs without the stagnation of ordinary print jobs which otherwise might be caused by the manual loading of paper required for the special print job. Ban, however, fails to disclose the

above identified recitations with respect to independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 3 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to withdraw the § 103(a) rejection.

4. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Motegi and Taniguchi. Claim 6 is an independent claim. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the reasons stated below.

Applicant submits that the combination of Motegi and Taniguchi fails to disclose, teach or suggest at least the following recitations.

reading print type information received through a communication interface together with a print data file and determining whether a user set the print type information to be either general printing or confidential printing with respect to the document file to be printed;

requesting a user to input a secret code when the print type information is set to be confidential printing;

As opposed to the claimed subject matter, a print job in Motegi cannot be set as being either a confidential printing or a general printing. Rather, the user in Motegi is assigned a password and job number for each print job by a network computer. The user then enters the assigned information into a printer to retrieve and print the job. As such, the print jobs in Motegi are not set as confidential but rather remain undisclosed simply because the user must enter the appropriate information into the printer in order to retrieve the print job.

Taniguchi discloses authorizing print jobs using password collation. However, Taniguchi, like Motegi, fails to disclose determining whether a user set the print type information to be either general printing or confidential printing with request to the document file to be printed. Taniguchi therefore fails to fulfill the deficiencies of Motegi.

Without at least such a suggestion, one would not have been (and could not have been) motivated to combine the computer based network printing system, as disclosed in Motegi, with the network print system, as taught in Taniguchi, to produce the claimed subject matter. Because there can be found in Taniguchi no teaching or suggestion that meets the above-identified recitations, the combination of Motegi and Taniguchi cannot reasonably be said to render obvious the claimed subject matter. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to withdraw the § 103(a) rejection from the claims.

5. Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Motegi and Taniguchi, as applied above in view of claim 6, and in combination with Uetmatsu.

Claim 7 depends from independent claim 6. Motegi and Taniguchi are deficient with respect to claim 6 for at least the reasons stated above. Therefore, the Examiner must rely on Uematsu to compensate for the foregoing deficiencies.

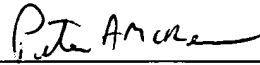
Uematsu is directed to a printer system having a constant memory. Uematsu, however, fails to disclose the above identified recitations with respect to independent claim 6. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 7 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to withdraw the § 103(a) rejection.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/455,331

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

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APPENDIX
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A printer[,] comprising:

an input unit;

a controller for reading print type information sent through a communication interface together with print data and determining whether a user selected a confidential print mode or a general print mode, and for performing, when the confidential print mode is selected, the printing of a confidential print data file [selected to be printed and] received when a code that is the same as a secret code set in the received print type information is input through the input unit; and

an engine controlled by the printer controller for printing an image corresponding to the print data to paper.

6. (Amended) A method for printing a confidential document in a printer[,] comprising: [the steps of]

[(a)] reading print type information received through a communication interface together with a print data file and determining whether a user set the print type information to be either general printing or confidential printing with respect to the document file to be printed;

[(b)] requesting a user to input a secret code when the print type information is set to be confidential printing; and

[(c)] printing an image corresponding to the print data to paper when the secret code input by the user [in the step (b)] is the same as the secret code set in the print type information.

8. (Amended) A method for printing a confidential document in an image printing system including a computer and a printer connected to the computer by a communication interface[,] comprising: [the steps of]

[(a)] requesting a user to select either general printing or confidential printing of setting a secret code with respect to a document file to be printed on a print type selection menu screen using an input device when there is a print request command through the input device of the computer;

[(b)] transferring information₁ on the selected print type and a print data file obtained by converting the document file into a language for [a] the printer₁ to the printer;

[(c)] reading information on the print type transferred to the printer together with the print data file and requesting [a] the user to input a secret code with respect to a confidential print data file selected to be printed and received;

[(d)] determining whether the input secret code is the same as the secret code previously set in the print type information; and

[(e)] performing the printing of the received print data file when it is determined that the input secret code is the same as the secret code. [set in step (a)]